

March 2006

Young heroes medal of honors presented

by Raymond Szymanski, Air Force Research Laboratory

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio — The Wright-Patt Young Heroes Association paid tribute to the courage and dignity of 11 young people, ages 2 to 17, who are fighting serious diseases or accident-related injuries, during their 12th annual valentine banquet Feb. 11.

Ella Grace Baker, Samuel Allen Baker, Rachel Nicole Strickle, Jenny Elizabeth RuiLi Suleski, Alexander Samuel Bean, Katelynn Marie Smith, Doris Ramey Mae Black, Ashley Clare Flickinger, Timothy Imants Hayes, David K. Smith and Jason Daniel Depew were honored at Wright State University's student union where they each received the young heroes medal of honor.

The young honorees represent many local communities including Dayton, Springfield, Jamestown, Franklin, Beavercreek, Arcanum, Springboro, Fairborn and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The challenges they face include leukemia, diabetes, Duchenne's MD, cerebral palsy, brain cell tumors, chronic lung disease and bone marrow transplants.

Gen. Bruce A. Carlson, commander, Air Force Materiel Command, presided over the medal ceremony and delivered the keynote address.

Each honoree and family joined General Carlson and his wife, Vicki, on the stage to receive the medal of honor, special gifts and a framed citation. While on stage, a script reader told their stories of courage and perseverance to the audience.

General Carlson likened the young heroes medal of honor to the Congressional Medal of Honor, wherein the recipient is honored for "faith, hope, courage and commitment" and "is saluted by everyone, including 4-star generals."

Numerous Air Force dignitaries in attendance were recognized along with local civic leaders, Greene County Commissioner Rick Perales and City of Fairborn Mayor Thomas Nagel.

Dinner music was provided by classical guitarist Jim McCutcheon. Kids were entertained by two balloon artist clowns who created unique headwear from their bottomless pockets filled with an endless supply of colorful balloons.

For more information on Wright-Patt's Young Heroes Association, call (937) 838-9162. @

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